Russia's Refusal to Supply Arms to Pakistan

2475. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement made by Russian Prime Minister which appeared in the Times of India dated the 24th December, 1994 under the caption "No arms for Pakistan" says Chernomyrden; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. From time to time there have been reports about Pakistan's interest in acquiring defence equipment from Russia. Our concerns in this regard have been brought to the attention of the Russian authorities who have assured us that these would be fully taken into account. During his visit to India in December 1994 Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin had publicly stated that Russia was not supplying arms to Pakistan and would not do so in future He also said that Russia's relations with Pakistan were transparent and were made known to India.

Acquisition of Nuclear Arms by India's Neighbouring Countries

2476. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's information about the development of nuclear-weapons capability and acquisition of such weapons in Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries; and

(b) what is Government's reaction thereto by way of raising competitive defence, improving the balance of power and maintaining peace in the Sub-continent?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government is aware of Pakistan's clandestine weapons-oriented nuclear programme. Government closely monitors all developments in the neighbourhood.

(b) The security situation of India remains constantly under review, particularly in the light of developments in the neighbourhood and Government will take all measures necessary to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation.

Indo-Bangladesh Relations

2477. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the major hindrances in bilateral relations of the two countries and the efforts made to remove these hindrances; and

(d) what further steps have been contemplated by Government for the improvement of relations?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Government are engaged in a continuous dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh for early resolution of all outstanding issues in a fair and equitable manner.

Relations between India and Bangladesh are complex. There are commonalities of culture and ethnicity between the two countries. Given the geographical proximity, common borders, ethnic and linguistic similarities,

some bilateral issues remain to be resolved.

The Government remain committed to strengthening of cooperative and mutually beneficial relations with Bangladesh. For this purpose, dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh at functional and senior levels, coupled with our endevaours to expand bilateral trade, particularly with the involvement of the private sector and joint ventures, stepping up of commercial interactions and cultural cooperation countinue.

Indian Companies help to build Iran's Poisonous Gas Complex

2478. SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report captioned 'India aiding Iran's nerve gas units' which appeared in the 'Indian Express' dated 31st January, 1995 regarding the help rendered by Indian companies to Iran in building a secret poison gas complex; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report is baseless. The three Indian companies identified in the news report are involved in a project for the construction of a pesticide plant in Iran. The project was awarded to the Indian companies as a result of an open, international tender in which companies from all over the world participated.

Contribution to ODA by the Developed Countries

2479. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the developed countries, at their recently held Summit-meeting in Copenhagen, have rejected the demand made by India and the other developing nations for a timeframe to contribute 0.7 percent of the Gross Domestic Product to the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as reported in 'The Hindustan Times' dated the 10th March, 1995;

(b) whether the rich and the poor countries who met for the first-time to work out ways and means for poverty eradication and full employment, among other social issues, arrived at any consensus on the need of increasing allocation to developing countries at least by 20 percent of ODA;

(c) if so, what are the details of discussions held at Copenhagen Summit and whether Indian delegation felt satisfied at the outcome of the meeting at the UN Summit for Social Development; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The World Summit for Social Development recognized that the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of action in developing countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries, will need additional financial resources and more effective development cooperation and assistance. Though the developed countries did not agree with the suggestion to achieve the target of 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP) as official development assistance (ODA) by 2000 AD, the summit did agree to strive for the fulfilment of the agreed target as soon as possible, and for increasing the share of funding for social